

and then to take the lowest tender of the parties as selected.

We apprehend the latter to be the best course for all important works, and emphatically so for sewer work, which is concealed from the public eye, required to be durable, and executed with dispatch; but we do not feel called upon to discuss this at large, for it will be sufficient for the justification of the Commissioners of Sewers to state that her Majesty's Board of Works adopts this course, and that most works of an important character are so contracted for."

"We now come to the comparisons drawn by the writer of the pamphlet between the works of this Commission and that of Holborn and Finsbury, and we at once repudiate the calling in question the proceedings of another Commission. Composed of able and honourable men, as the Holborn Commission is, we have no doubt that their proceedings are based on a sense of public duty and the public benefit. Having no power to examine into the transactions of that Commission, and furnished only with a few materials for checking the statements in the pamphlet, we protest against the members of this Court being called upon to institute the comparison."

"The comparison made between the works of the two Commissions will more strikingly illustrate the unfairness of the allegations in the pamphlet.

It will be seen, by the report in Appendix No. 8, that a Holborn sewer of 12 feet 10 inches, sectional area, with 10 feet 6 inches reduced brickwork, is compared with a Westminster sewer of 15 feet, with 16 feet 6 inches brickwork; and a Holborn sewer of 9 feet 10 inches with 9 feet 6 inches brickwork, is compared with a Westminster sewer of 11 feet 5½ inches with 14 feet 4 inches brickwork.

But this is by no means all, as the following comparison of the sites will show:—

Westminster Commission.	Holborn Commission.
Albemarle-street, St. George's	Collier-street, Penton-vill
Castle-street and Hemming's-row, St. Martin's	Parkfield-street, Islington, Battle-bridge, and Holloway-road.
Wallington-street and Bow-street	New-road, St. Pancras.
Barnes's-street, St. Marylebone	Battle-bridge, and Holloway-road, and Bedford-square.

Now, here, the constructing of sewers, in a maiden soil, unincumbered with vaults, old sewers, or any of the extraordinary obstructions which present themselves in old streets, is compared with those old streets where such difficulties occur.

Relative to the great cost of the sewer in George-court, Piccadilly, complained of in the pamphlet, the committee say:—

"The great extra expense was not in the construction of the sewer, but in the difficulty of excavating in a narrow court without damage to the houses on either side. Mr. Leslie states that the 'original report' in this case has been altered, and does not correspond with the copy on the records. We have compared the two, and find that they exactly agree; and there is no reason to doubt but that the report is in the same condition now as when presented to the Court. We have also referred to the rough draft of his report, which has some alterations in it, made by the officer, as is generally the case with such papers; they do not, however, affect the *bona fides* of the transaction, and were evidently made at the time of settling the draft prior to engrossment.

This case, in fact, only affords one more illustration of the difficulty and expense of constructing sewers in the older parts of the metropolis, and that a comparison with a line of sewers in a new district cannot fairly be made."

* Mr. Dowley says on this matter, Appendix No. 10: "I would state that the excess above the estimate arose from the peculiar situation and other circumstances attending the work in question. In the first place, I would remark that the width of the court between the houses does not exceed twelve feet. That the houses are very old and dilapidated, and that the front walls (which are built upon breasted, and supported by story-posts) are much out of the perpendicular, and have a tendency, in the event of the foundations being disturbed by the slipping or falling of the earth during the execution of the works to the sewer, to fall over into the court. This necessarily occasioned great precaution to be observed for their security, for, had any part of the buildings given way, the result might have been of the most serious nature. To guard against such a casualty, it was deemed advisable to strut across the court from side to side, as also to put up raking shores to the two high houses next Piccadilly.

To unimpair this part of the work, the internal parts of the houses had to be interfered with, and to be afterwards

What the Secretary of State will say to the reply remains to be seen; nor are we disposed to offer any supposition at this moment. One most important matter touching the public health, and involving in a great degree the question of the efficiency of the commission or its officers, is the *present state of the sewers*; and to this, on the part of the public, we feel ourselves under the necessity of calling the immediate attention of the Court. At a meeting on Friday, the 19th inst., when Mr. Dowley was called on for his report on the faulty sewers, pointed out by John Phillips, the clerk of the works, he said it was not ready, nor would it be in six months. This would seem inexplicable, but for what occurred afterwards.

Mr. Leslie stated that he had heard that Mr. Phillips, in pursuance of the order of Court, had reported 123 sewers in his district as more or less filled with offensive matters, and some completely obstructed. He thought it was a proper occasion to notice an occurrence of which he became cognizant that morning, in inquiring below what the labourers had been employed in. And this was one case not in Mr. Phillips's district, but in Mr. Morton's. The facts he had elicited were these: that about seven years ago 160 feet of second size sewer were built in the New-road, by the trustees of the Parochial Schools, communicating with the sewer into Devonshire-place. Mr. John White's house-drains, Devonshire-place House, New-road, having become stopped, he entered a complaint on the 28th November last. Since the complaint had been entered, out of the length of about eighty feet, *sixty-five loads* of silt, said to be Macadamised road-stuff, had been lifted up and carted away, and then about three feet in depth of the looser soil was washed down the Devonshire-place sewer.

Mr. John White said it was very extraordinary; the stuff appeared like putty, it was so tenacious.

The chairman, Edward Willoughby, Esq., tendered his resignation, which was accepted, and Capt. Bague moved, and Mr. France seconded, a vote of thanks to the late chairman for his past services.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

Mr. Gravatt does not stand alone among the engineers in having failed to satisfy the expectations, whether reasonable or unreasonable, of certain railway directors; the managing committee of the Dudley, Madeley, and Broseley Railway have met, and denounced Mr. Giles, their late consulting engineer, in consequence of his failure in effecting the deposits of the plans. They advertise that his services are dispensed with, and they contemplate taking such proceedings against him as counsel may advise. Mr. Blunt, another engineer, is severely denounced by his employers on the Derby and Manchester (Ashbourne) line, and was accused, at a public meeting, of gross neglect in his plans, which have been examined by Mr. Hawkshaw, and found wanting.

It appears, from a list relating to the number of schemes for new lines, in which the principal engineers are respectively engaged, that Mr. Brunel is connected with 14, Mr. Robert Stephenson with 34, Sir John Macneill with 37, Mr. Locke with 31, Mr. Vignolles with 22, Sir John Rennie with 20, Mr. Rastrick with 17, Mr. Miller with 10, Mr. Gravatt with 10, Mr. S. Hughes with 9, Mr. W. Cubitt with 11, Mr. Gibbs with 12, Messrs. Birch with 7, Mr. Blunt with 2, and Mr. Braithwaite with 9. On Saturday last the first sod was turned on the Bedford and Birmingham line, at Brngborough-hill, about the centre of the line. The ceremony was performed by the Dukes of Bedford, assisted by Lord Alford; the Duke of Bedford being unable to attend, having

made good and left perfect in every respect, even to restoring portions of the paint.

Besides these works, others, far more expensive, were obliged to be resorted to for the security of the buildings; for instance, when the ground was in progress of being excavated, it was found necessary in many parts to dig out and wheel away the same for the entire width of the court, in order to secure the foundations of the houses, in the course of which work, whatever brickwork was met with, forming areas, tanks, and cisterns, &c., had to be taken down, and re-constructed.

The great additional depth at which the new sewer was built below the basements of the contiguous houses, as also with the view of obtaining a solid foundation upon which to rebuild the areas, &c., it was deemed prudent to fill in at the sides of and over the sewer with concrete, and to leave in most of the struts and planks below the level of the paving."

been summoned to London by Lord J. Russell.

—An experimental iron carriage is said to be now running on one of the Belgian lines, and it is thought that eventually it will be found cheaper than wood, and as good. It may be mentioned, as a proof of the immense amount of business now being carried on by manufacturers of locomotives, that no firm engaged in the trade will contract to supply engines in less than three years. The operations on that part of Messrs. Grahamsley and Reid's contract on the Newcastle and Berwick line, which is not subtle, have been stopped, in consequence of the workmen refusing to accept of the wages offered them, viz., from 14s. to 15s. per week. The men demand 18s., which have not been conceded. The high tides of last week flooded and have interrupted the works on the Thames Junction line to such an extent, that the opening will be delayed. The portion near Bow-creek has suffered most. A great number of men are already employed on the Trent Valley line, in the neighbourhood of Rugeley; the shafts for the tunnel at Shugborough are in a state of forwardness, and the general preparations are such as to justify the expectation that the line will be opened in eighteen months from the present time. The Newcastle and Darlington company are about to commence their branch from Pelaw to Washington (five miles), and the extension of the line (three-quarters of a mile) to the proposed station at Monkwearmouth. Mr. Stephenson, the English engineer, and Prof. Matteani have, at the request of Prince Demidoff and Prince Poniatowsky, who have obtained the grant for the railroad from Florence to Forli, been making surveys, to ascertain whether the said line is practicable. The result is decidedly favourable to the undertaking. The line, if carried out, will form a means of rapid communication between the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas. The Great Western Railway Company have very recently provided baths, at one halfpenny, for their numerous servants and workmen at the Swindon station. On the first Saturday after the opening, fifteen thousand gallons of water were supplied to the baths, which were in constant use throughout the day. A laundry is in progress, and will shortly be opened by the company.

The great tunnel connected with the Edinburgh and Glasgow line is near completion; workmen are engaged at it night and day. It is nearly 1,000 yards long. Upwards of three-fourths of it is finished. The other tunnel, 170 yards long, is in a forward condition, and the rest of the line having been laid with the sleepers and rails, the company expect that it will be ready for opening by March or April. The opening of the iron bridge over the Wensum, near Norwich, and which connects the Norfolk line with the Norwich and Yarmouth, took place last Monday week. Its weight, including piles, which are of iron also, headed plates, &c., exceeds 323 tons. It is a swing bridge, so as to admit vessels navigating the river. The turning is effected by a windlass, and the arrangement is so simple, as to afford a single person full power to work it. The centre forms 16 arches of 33 feet in length, and on each side are the standards, forming piers, surmounted by gas lamps, shewing red and green glasses, according to the state of the tide. Part of the permanent way of the Middleham and Redcar line is finished, and it is expected that the whole will be completed by the early part of the summer.

ANCIENT PAINTING IN CARPENTERS' HALL.

A VERY curious and interesting ancient fresco (?) painting has just been brought to light in the execution of certain restorations now in progress at Carpenters' Hall, London Wall. It is on the wall, at what may be termed the dis end of the Hall, and having been covered up from time immemorial, no one knew of its existence. The subject of it has reference to the craft of carpenters, representing our Saviour and his father at that employment; likewise (as is conjectured) Solomon overlooking the erection of his temple, and Noah engaged in the construction of the Ark, in separate compartments. An artist employed by one of the archaeological societies has been at work copying it, so that it will probably be engraved.